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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 000875

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR TASK FORCE 3 AND NEA/ARP ANDREW MACDONALD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#)
PINR, AMGT, TF, YM
SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: YEMEN'S H1N1 PANDEMIC
PREPARATIONS

REF: A. STATE 45833
[1](#)B. STATE 45269

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Although H1N1 influenza (informally known as swine flu) has not yet arrived in Yemen, the ROYG has mobilized resources in preparation for its arrival. The Ministry of Health has set up a 24-hour operations room and distributed Tamiflu to cities throughout Yemen. A quarantine office at the airport is screening arriving passengers through a questionnaire and temperature checks using thermal imaging devices. Post has briefed Embassy staff and sent a warden message to the American community with the most recent information on H1N1 influenza. Prior preparations for H5N1 influenza (avian flu) have proven fortuitous in the face of yet another pandemic flu threat. END SUMMARY.

PRIOR PREPARATIONS PRECLUDE POOR PERFORMANCE

[1](#)2. (U) The ROYG has mobilized resources in preparation for a local outbreak of H1N1 influenza. Dr. Ali Al-Mudhwahi, Director General of Family Health at the Ministry of Public Health and Population, told EconOff on May 4 that the ROYG has updated the national preparedness plan for H1N1 influenza (informally known as swine flu), sent the Minister of Health to the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) emergency meeting on H1N1 influenza, and taken practical steps to identify infectious people. (NOTE: In the current GCC session, the Yemeni Minister of Public Health and Population, Abdul-Karim Rasea, is the chair of the GCC Health Ministers, which places Yemen at the forefront of regional efforts, even though it is not a full member of the GCC. END NOTE.) The ROYG has reactivated the 24-hour operation room in the Central Office for Surveillance at the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Health is working closely with the National Center for Health Education and Information, which issues reports to the mass media, both nationally and regionally.

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to Dr. Mohammed Jahaf, Coordinator of Lab Based Surveillance at the Ministry of Public Health and Population, the ROYG has instituted extensive guidelines for case management. Jahaf told EconOff on May 4 that the ministry has distributed Tamiflu (oseltamivir phosphate) to local branches in main cities. The ministry has also identified coordinators at the governorate level and district levels. In preparation for H5N1 influenza (avian flu) in 2005, the ROYG acquired enough quantities of Tamiflu to treat five percent of the Yemeni population. With a shelf-life until 2010, the Tamiflu, although limited in quantity, is still available to treat H1N1 influenza. The ROYG is acquiring a kit from the World Health Organization (WHO) this week to test for the H1N1 virus variety.

THERMAL IMAGING DEVICES IN USE AT AIRPORT

14. (U) A 24-hour Quarantine Office has been in operation to screen arriving passengers at all three international airports (Sanaa, Aden, and Mukalla) since April 19. Personnel screen passengers for H1N1 influenza via a questionnaire that every passenger fills out upon arrival in Yemen. Since May 3, the ROYG has also instituted a process of thermography to screen for arriving passengers with elevated temperatures, using ThermoFlash, Model LX-26. If an arriving passenger has a temperature above 37.8 degrees Celsius or 104.5 degrees Fahrenheit, they are given a blood test. If a passenger is found to be ill, they are immediately taken to the hospital or given a dose of Tamiflu, also available at the airport.

EMBASSY SANAA,S SITREP

15. (SBU) Post,s Health Unit has briefed the Embassy community on CDC,S assessment of H1N1 influenza. The Embassy,s Regional Medical Officer told EconOff on May 3 that the Health Unit has enough Tamiflu to treat all Embassy Americans, but not the Locally Employed Staff. Post,s consular section disseminated a warden message related to H1N1 influenza on May 2 with the latest information about the flu.

COMMENT

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16. (SBU) Prior preparations for H5N1 influenza (avian flu) have proven fortuitous in the face of another pandemic flu threat. In 2005, the ROYG acquired the necessary resources for detection and treatment of the H5N1 virus up to Phase III of the WHO,s pandemic influenza progression. The ROYG remains in close contact with GCC colleagues and the WHO, and uses the National Center for Health Education and Information to disseminate reports. As a result, the ROYG has been able to mobilize resources in a relatively short time and is prepared to share breaking news with the public. END

COMMENT.

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